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New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 52 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and A/57/387/Corr.1)

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): The delegation of the Republic of Mozambique feels honoured to be part of this Assembly, in which United Nations Member States are debating an agenda for further change, with a view to strengthening the United Nations system. We thank the Secretary-General for introducing his report (A/57/387 and Corr.1). My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union, and by Egypt on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation has carefully reviewed the report of the Secretary-General and considers it a very useful tool in the current efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system. The report contains good proposals that deserve our full attention. We welcome those proposals for further pursuing the agenda for change and pledge our full support to the Secretary-General in this daunting task, which requires the collective wisdom and responsibility of the United Nations family.

As stated by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, the far-reaching proposals advanced in the report of the Secretary-General require more time for consideration, including further, detailed clarification of their nature and scope, as well as an extensive debate within the United Nations family. In that regard, we welcome the President's intention to hold consultations on the report. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to share its preliminary views on the report, in the hope that they will contribute to deepening the debate that we have just initiated on this matter.

My delegation has been following closely the reform process under way since 1997. Reform has contributed towards positioning the United Nations system at the forefront of international action to tackle global challenges. The reforms undertaken thus far, mainly targeting the internal structures and culture of the United Nations, have improved coherence, efficiency, openness and creativity within the United Nations system.

Now, we need to address the ultimate goals of the reform: ensuring that the Organization devotes its attention to the priorities agreed upon by Member States and that the Secretariat delivers better service. That requires a wide-ranging reform process that also needs to target the institutional framework of the United Nations system, including, inter alia, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council,

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the Security Council and the programme of work of the Organization.

My delegation believes that aligning the activities of the United Nations system and the priorities defined by Member States should be based on a common policy framework drawn from the Millennium Declaration, the outcome documents of major United Nations conferences and summits — such as those on financing for development, sustainable development, the least developed countries, HIV/AIDS, children, small arms, racism, women, social development and human settlements — and other legislative mandates contained in relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

The common policy framework for the entire United Nations system should provide clear benchmarks related to the full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as other goals and targets envisaged in the relevant documents used to inform the drafting of the framework. The policy framework should also recognize the special, preferential treatment that Africa and least developed countries should be accorded when we are prioritizing United Nations activities, as agreed upon in various meetings and documents.

The common policy framework to be debated and agreed upon by consensus, as well as the revised programme budget drafted on the basis of that framework, should be forward-looking, action-oriented and results-based. But, ultimately, it should once and for all align activities with agreed priorities, including by allocating the necessary resources for the relevant activities. Resources should be allocated to the areas where they are most needed and where they can make a real difference. We should avoid the current trend of allocating resources based on political agendas alien to the United Nations objectives, which has proved to be cost ineffective and wasteful. The recommendations put forward in the Secretary-General's report attempt to deal with some of those issues.

In this reform process, Africa should indeed be accorded special attention. We welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General to enhance the mandate of the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa as a step in the right direction. Although at this stage there is no clarity on the specific mandate, we believe that a focus on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) would be in order, consistent with the recently adopted General Assembly resolution on NEPAD resolution 57/2. We also hope that this arrangement will be of a permanent nature and that the Adviser will report directly to the Secretary-General to ensure the necessary political guidance and impact.

At the same time, it is crucial that the office of the Adviser be adequately staffed and resourced. We further suggest that the Adviser work closely with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States as most African countries fall into the category of least developed countries. Mandates could thus be streamlined and cooperation ensured.

Prioritization of activities and resources should also be extended to the United Nations presence at the country level. We believe that the United Nations should focus both on countries emerging from conflicts and on those involved in development activities.

The common policy framework should also be translated into the United Nations country offices through the mainstreaming into national development strategies of the Millennium Development Goals and other goals and targets that will form part of the policy framework. United Nations country offices should be further improved and strengthened to ensure that they play a major role in advocacy, implementation and policy advice to countries in need. Therefore, United Nations country offices should be adequately resourced, especially financially and in terms of staff, in order to fulfil the important tasks at hand. This requires the additional and predictable resources, particularly core resources, that are so critical to development projects in Africa and in least developed countries in general.

We welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General to prepare a document clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation. That would definitely address the current duplication, competition and overlaps that are common at the country level, and would thereby contribute to making savings and to minimizing potential waste of resources.

My delegation supports closer interaction between the United Nations and civil society, as well as partnerships with the private sector. We believe that promoting such partnerships would certainly result in added value to the organization. In this process, we

must ensure that participation by civil society organizations in the affairs of the United Nations is done in a fair and balanced manner, in which civil society organizations of developing countries have a meaningful role to play. In that connection, we support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a panel of eminent persons to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society.

The Republic of Mozambique is broadly supportive of the Secretary-General's proposals to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations and streamline the budgetary and administrative activities of the Organization. We support the Secretary-General's proposal to prepare a revised programme budget for 2004-2005, based on the priorities of the Organization: a common policy framework for the entire United Nations system drawn from the Millennium Declaration, outcome documents of major United Nations conferences and summits, and other legislative mandates adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We took note of the Secretary-General's proposals on enhancing staff mobility across the United Nations system. In our view, mobility, together with best quality in staffing, should be geared towards ensuring the right staff for the required job. We reaffirm resolution 55/258 as the cornerstone of human resources management at the United Nations. In particular, we reaffirm our principled position on the need to ensure equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the United Nations staff. Therefore, we urge the Secretary-General to fulfil the relevant provisions of resolution 55/258, including presenting a programme with specific targets on the recruitment of nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented countries.

The reform process we are engaged in can be successful only if all members of the United Nations family show the necessary political will and shoulder their collective responsibility. As we reach the most critical part of the reform process, the sense of commitment should be stepped up. The Assembly can rest assured of the commitment and cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique in that regard.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): Seeing that I have the privilege of being the forty-seventh speaker on this agenda item, I will endeavour to keep my statement brief. The report before us, "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), is nothing less than extraordinary. It is concise, candid and constructive. It is a work that embodies the spirit of the agenda itself, and it calls for "fewer reports that are richer in content and shorter in length" (para. 27).

I would like to comment on four specific aspects of the Secretary-General's report that are of particular interest to my delegation. First, regarding the work of this very body, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General suggests the combining of duplicative discussions and the reduction of recurring agenda items. My delegation has frequently lamented the automatic annual rehash of resolutions without regard for the relevance of their content or the efficiency of their treatment. A reduction in the number of overlapping resolutions can be achieved by simply merging and editing texts, thus creating important savings in time, money and paperwork. The pattern of recurring agenda items is particularly annoying and wasteful. We support the Secretary-General's call for a rigorous review of this practice and his suggestion that many issues no longer be addressed annually.

Secondly, I note the Secretary-General's call for realigned priorities, including a focus on technology-based development solutions, water issues, the promotion of good governance as the foundation for peace, and the strengthening of the United Nations capacity to fight terrorism. Those goals seem to my delegation to be right on target. From our perspective, those four priorities constitute the building blocks for regional reconciliation and provide a promise of cooperation, development and prosperity for all peace-loving peoples.

Thirdly, in his report, the Secretary-General observes that "The Department of Public Information has suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of too many mandates and missions" (*para. 60*). Our delegation could not agree more with that statement. The valuable resources of this Organization have been squandered on unnecessary and partial information efforts, perpetuated by partisan political perspectives. The new operating model of the Department proposed by the Secretary-General should resolve that wasteful and counterproductive phenomenon.

Lastly, the Secretary-General calls for the establishment of a panel to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and to

offer practical recommendations for approved modalities of interaction. The effort to bring about improved engagement with civil society based on procedures and policies that reflect greater coherence, consistency and predictability is indeed welcome. The terms and conditions governing the accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations conferences should indeed be reviewed and improved in order to, among other things, protect the focus of the Organization from being appropriated by hidden agendas.

In conclusion, we both welcome and endorse the report of the Secretary-General. We stand ready to assist in the efforts to turn that vision into a reality.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the submission of his report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). Mexico welcomes this new effort by the Secretary-General to reform the Organization so that it can face effectively the challenges and the opportunities presented to us by the new millennium. We believe that the report before us today for consideration not only is timely and necessary, but also encompasses spheres that go beyond the field of administration and thus require a renewed commitment by all Member States to multilateralism. This is a matter of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to act to promote peace and development.

In that context, I should like, first of all, to commit the delegation of Mexico to working together with the Secretary-General and with the President of the General Assembly in the process of building the consensus that this exercise requires. We shall maintain high-level participation in the deliberations and negotiations that are to follow this debate, and we shall always seek to place the general interest above individual considerations.

Five years ago, the United Nations began a process of profound and necessary transformation that has not been completed and that now includes areas unimagined in 1997. We have moved from structural reform of the Secretariat to reviewing the working methods of the Organization and of the intergovernmental organs that constitute it. That requires a set of actions, not only by the Secretary-General but also, and above all, by Member States. It is the duty of all Member States to review the Organization's priorities and to provide the general guidance that enables the United Nations to pursue its principles and purposes in a new international context that is always changing.

We must develop a new strategic vision that incorporates new actors and realities so that our action continues to be relevant and so that we can have a constructive impact on international events. That means abandoning certain obsolete parliamentary practices and reaffirming confidence in the system and in the need for balanced and complementary action among the principal organs of the Organization.

We view the proposals contained in the report as part of a set of actions to be taken not only by the Secretariat but also by the other principal organs of the United Nations in order to make progress in a process of broad and sustained reform. We appreciate the frankness and the clarity with which the report of the Secretary-General presents the current situation with regard to certain aspects of the Organization. That focus helps us to identify strengths and weaknesses.

It is clear that the full implementation of the measures proposed by the Secretary-General will require broad consultation and the political will of Member States. There are various possibilities to put forth in our discussions. Accordingly, we support the proposal to create a high-level open-ended group that would work informally. We must ensure that the process is given genuine impetus from the highest level of our delegations. In any case, we must quickly clarify the nature of the process and the timetable for our future discussions. We must not miss the opportunity to adopt the necessary relevant decisions, and to adopt them now.

There are certain specific aspects on which we should like to comment. With regard to the budget, we believe that the Organization has made important progress with respect to planning, transparency, accountability and financial discipline. In addition, we note with satisfaction a greater rationalization of the work of the Organization and a better use of the available resources.

Mexico agrees with the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in action 1 of his report, that the priorities of the Millennium Declaration should be better reflected in the programme budget. However, my delegation is concerned about the possibility that in

that exercise, certain priorities, such as disarmament and drug control, might be put aside even though they are fully reflected in the medium-term plan. Therefore, my delegation is interested in knowing how that proposal will be implemented, since the delicate balance of priorities established in the medium-term plan must not be altered.

My delegation also believes that we must discuss in depth action 21 (d), which would give the Secretary-General a certain level of budgetary discretion. The two criteria that, in our opinion, should guide the discussions on this subject are confidence in the Secretariat and, secondly, the need for oversight mechanisms that clearly specify frames of reference within which the Secretary-General can make use of such capacities.

Mexico accords high priority to the subject of human rights and generally agrees with the report's proposals in that regard. We believe that strengthening the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is very important. My delegation awaits with great interest the report and the plans to be formulated in order to implement actions 2 to 5 of the Secretary-General's report.

Lastly, my delegation believes that human resources are the most valuable asset of countries and institutions. We understand the concern of the Secretary-General that the United Nations should be an attractive option for those who work here. We are aware that instituting modern working methods will require greater flexibility. We believe, however, that the new culture of work proposed by the Secretary-General should include accountability as one of its central priorities.

We reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his valuable proposals. They are clearly directed towards ensuring that our Organization is more effective and that it has a clearer approach with respect to priorities. My delegation will work with the President of the General Assembly and with the Secretary-General to attain those objectives.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: We welcome the fact that Secretary-General Kofi Annan has begun his second term of office by submitting proposals aimed at ensuring that the United Nations focuses its efforts on implementing the priorities set out at a number of conferences. My country has already expressed its views regarding the changes and reforms proposed by the Secretary-General in document A/57/387. Before making several further comments, I should like to stress that my country fully supports the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the statement by the representative of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the African Union, and the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the African Group.

The Charter sets out all the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its principal organs. Those organs have done a great deal of work and achieved much over the years, and the Millennium Declaration represents a further step forward in this respect despite many unexpected challenges. However, we want to ensure that the United Nations is even stronger than in the past, so it is essential and urgent that we make its bodies more effective. The Secretary-General should be commended for having taken this new initiative in response to the wishes expressed two years ago by our heads of State or Government, who made clear their resolve to make our Organization more effective in attaining its declared goals.

We note that there is a need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly; that is the task that we have set ourselves. This year, Member States elected the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the chairpersons of the Main Committees three months before the beginning of the regular session. That represents important progress, but we believe that further changes need to be made. A number of United Nations resolutions remain dead letters, which is no longer acceptable. We must endeavour to distinguish between successes and failures and how to deal with the causes of such failures. We must be candid lest we create the impression that the General Assembly is merely a forum in which people lament certain situations or praise certain things, but where nobody really listens.

The Secretary-General was right to call upon the General Assembly to streamline its agenda. We support the idea that a number of items should be studied on a biennial basis. We would also like to endorse the practice employed at this session of clustering certain items and considering them jointly. We do not, however, believe that other items that have been on the agenda for years should be eliminated. We believe that it really depends on the decisions taken under those

items: if they have not been implemented, they can be deleted.

The Secretary-General has said that United Nations reform must be accompanied by reform of the Security Council. This is a very important issue. We must demonstrate the necessary political will to resolve the stalemate in that area in order to facilitate the reform of the Security Council so that it can become truly representative of all States.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's statement that Security Council reform cannot be confined to an increase in the membership but that there must also be an improvement in the Council's working methods. We have made some progress in that area, but not enough. We must improve its working methods and address the shortcomings in that respect. The most recent changes in the Council's work must be institutionalized.

The Secretary-General states that the Security Council must turn to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to help it address issues and problems. Member States should also make an effort to promote the work of the Security Council and increase its contacts with other bodies, such as the International Court of Justice, as well as with regional organizations and arrangements. It must be more transparent in its work, more neutral and more objective. It should not operate according to a policy of double standards. We need to make good on these shortcomings, which have a very unfortunate impact on international peace and security.

The Secretary-General has described areas that he wants to be reinforced. Many meetings were held last year, but a number of countries were not able to participate effectively in them. We recognize the need to increase international awareness in this regard, and we call upon all Member States to show discipline and to refrain from calling for the convening of conferences, apart from high-level conferences that discuss new questions.

We fully agree that we should not produce unnecessary reports. Reports should be shorter, their content should be better and they must be transparent and must reflect the outcome of consultations held with the countries concerned. We should eliminate the problems associated with drafting consolidated reports with the countries concerned. Countries should submit their reports in good time, and they should be available in the official languages.

The Secretary-General's report refers to adapting the work programme of the United Nations to tailor it to the Millennium Declaration goals. We support his comments with regard to delving more deeply into the causes of conflict in the face of military threats. This should become a priority for the Organization. We believe that in this respect it is important to increase support for the international campaign to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

But we should not simply provide advice to countries so that they can strengthen their legislative and administrative frameworks in order to combat terrorism. There is a need to study the causes of terrorism, too, to define it and to remedy the situation in the context of a global vision, bearing in mind the interests, concerns and security of all.

There are now so many United Nations bodies established under human rights conventions that periodic reports also have proliferated and cast heavy burdens on all countries, especially developing countries. We believe, however, that each State needs to submit a consolidated report within the context of the various United Nations bodies. We need to eliminate duplication in order to relieve the resultant financial and human burden. We hope that this goal can be achieved, in keeping with the recommendations submitted by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We believe that the issue of human rights is a very important and sensitive one, and we need to show impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, as well as respect for the various cultures and their beliefs.

We very much support the role of the United Nations in helping Africa to face the numerous challenges confronting it. We are pleased that the Secretary-General has reiterated that Africa is one of the prime concerns of the United Nations. The Organization must continue to work to ensure that the African continent is given its rightful place, so that African countries can reap the fruit of their national efforts.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the international community has developed over the years, but we see in the report of the Secretary-General that it leaves something to be desired. We support the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations, but some aspects need to be dealt with by the high-level

panel that the Secretary-General is seeking to establish. We hope that rules will be established guaranteeing the participation of all, in particular the non-governmental organizations of the developing countries. As the Secretary-General has said, the number of these organizations is very small compared to those in the industrialized countries.

The Secretary-General is also proposing a number of actions to try to simplify the submission of the budget and the budget outline. We believe that a medium-term plan spanning only two years would cover too short a period, so we do not think that it should be reduced.

We believe that United Nations officials, who hail from so many regions, have vast potential to offer. We support the Secretary-General's quest to recruit nationals of countries that are under-represented or not represented at all. We believe that officials should be recruited who are willing to devote their lives to this Organization and work anywhere in the world. Of course, this should not affect the recruitment of new staff members who might meet the needs of the Organization.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General should take steps that are in keeping with the suggestions contained in the report. Reforms have been suggested by the Secretary-General, but it is up to Member States to decide on them. We wish to reiterate that the delegation of my country will participate positively in this process, and we assure the President of our cooperation.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China earlier in this debate. The Jamaican delegation would like to add a few comments of its own, having studied the report of the Secretary-General on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". We regard the proposals contained therein as important initiatives for reform, and we support their objectives.

The report builds on a process begun in 1997 and proposes adjustments to increase efficiency in the Secretariat's operations. We congratulate the Secretary-General on his vision of modernization, which is aimed at increasing efficiency in administrative arrangements in order to deliver improved service to Member States.

The Millennium Development Goals, as well as the outcomes of the global conferences held over the past decade, have set new priorities aimed, inter alia, at achieving economic and social development as well as the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and at confronting emerging new threats to international security. We agree that it is obviously necessary for the United Nations to align its programmes to meet the needs and priorities of the time. Jamaica therefore supports the proposal for action 1, which intends to bring the programme budget in line with the priorities agreed in the Millennium Declaration.

We are also favourably disposed towards the proposal for a shorter, more strategic medium-term plan covering two years rather than four. We believe that this would be better geared towards allowing pragmatic adjustments within a shorter budget cycle.

With regard to human rights, Jamaica concurs that the United Nations has an important role to play in strengthening human rights. We note the progress made in promoting human rights norms and practices and in supporting human rights at the country level. We therefore support the proposal to streamline the machinery within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This should result in better and more cooperative arrangements between the Office and Governments and in a reduction in the current onerous levels of reporting requirements.

We also support the strengthening of the delivery of public information on United Nations activities. We generally welcome the proposals for the repositioning of the Department of Public Information.

With regard to United Nations Information Centres, my delegation recognizes the important role played by these centres in disseminating information at the country level. For developing countries, these Centres are a useful instrument for sensitizing people to the vital role of the United Nations and how it works for them. We note that the report proposes the rationalization of these Centres around regional hubs, beginning with Europe. We are mindful of the need to minimize the costs associated with maintaining the Centres, but we would caution that further plans to regionalize them should take into consideration the special needs of the regions affected.

The integration of United Nations libraries through the use of information technology is obviously

useful in improving access to information. My delegation supports measures that will bring about more efficient systems. The creation of a multilingual electronic gateway for accessing collections, documents and information is a positive step, but due consideration must be given to countries which may not have the technological capacity to access this information. We therefore believe that the delivery of information should be so constructed as to allow developing countries with varying technological capacities to be able to receive the service.

The streamlining of reports and the management of conferences and meetings are areas in which reform is needed. My delegation shares the view that there is too much duplication in the area of reports. Every effort should be made to reduce that duplication. We also agree with the need to streamline reports in order to make them more consolidated and focused, as well as with the need to achieving some reduction in the volume and frequency of reports, without sacrificing quality or comprehensiveness.

Improving coordination among the component parts of the United Nations has proven to be an effective means of confronting challenges, especially those faced by developing countries. Jamaica supports the proposal to develop an implementation plan that includes joint programming and the pooling of common resources in United Nations country offices. We regard the delivery of technical cooperation to developing countries as being of particular importance. In that connection, we must express some concern about the proposals mentioned in paragraphs 50 and 51, concerning incorporating human rights into operational activities at the country level. Our concern is with the possible diversion of resources from traditional areas of technical cooperation. We therefore look forward to the report to be presented in September 2003 and to a clarification of roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation.

An important aspect of the new reforms is the system for allocating resources to priorities. The Secretary-General's proposal for simplifying and shortening the planning and budget cycle appears to be practical and workable. A medium-term plan covering two years instead of four is better geared towards allowing for pragmatic adjustments to meet new requirements and the needs of the times. There would also obviously be a need for some modification of the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which would need some further discussion.

Jamaica supports the view that the impact and vitality of the Organization rests upon having a core of international civil servants who have dedicated their careers to the service of the United Nations. The development of a comprehensive human resource policy is therefore an essential part of ensuring that the United Nations attracts and maintains top-quality staff. It is in this regard that we welcome the ongoing reform measures pertaining to human resource management aimed at encouraging mobility, enlarging opportunities for General Service staff, boosting staff morale and rejuvenating the Organization's Secretariat.

Finally, we look forward to participating in a process that will allow all Member States to be involved in reaching a consensus position on initiatives proposed in the Secretary-General's report. The strengthening of the United Nations is a process that matters to all of us, and it should be organized and reformed so as to serve our common purposes. Jamaica, as always, is ready to play its part.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me once again to express our pleasure at seeing you, Madam, presiding over this important agenda item before the General Assembly.

I would also wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387).

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt elaborating Africa's non-paper on behalf of the African Group.

We believe that the Secretary-General's report is timely. I say that because two years ago we adopted the Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals. We believe that those Goals constitute not only what should define the key objective of the international community, but that they will also serve as the standard by which our collective endeavours will be judged in a decade or so. Previous reviews of internationally agreed development goals have left much to be desired, a problem that has been particularly pronounced on the African continent. I would also say that the report is timely in as far as the present agenda to strengthen the United Nations needs

to be properly managed to improve the effectiveness of the Organization with a view to more fully achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to submit a thoroughly revised programme budget to the General Assembly in 2003 that better reflects the priorities agreed at the Millennium Assembly.

The General Assembly is now considering the Secretary-General's agenda for further change, at a time when the Assembly has welcomed, and Member States have expressed full support for, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's decision to better coordinate the Secretariat's support for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in their consideration of Africa-related issues.

My delegation welcomes the development of an implementation plan by the United Nations Development Group to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. At the same time, we would wish to encourage the Group to develop a plan for effective and increased mobilization of resources devoted to United Nations operational activities for development. My delegation is also open to consideration of the Secretary-General's request for flexibility in reallocating resources between programmes, once, of course, issues of accountability and monitoring are clarified.

With regard to human resources issues, we fully support the Secretary-General's proposal for enhancing staff mobility across the United Nations system. As one of several duty stations, Ethiopia stands ready to extend its full cooperation in this respect. We are also happy to note the intentions of the Secretary-General to increase opportunities for General Service staff. In this context, we support the request to raise the annual quota of professional posts available for successful General Service examination candidates to 25 per cent.

In the area of public information we welcome Mr. Annan's measures for attempting to turn a fragmented and ineffective Department of Public Information into one that is not defensive about the many positive activities that the United Nations has carried out and is currently involved in. To have an impact, the Department should vigorously advocate for multilateralism. What we see in many of the 71 information centres around the world is that very little information is given out, to say nothing about the Department really making a case for the United Nations. The Department is, in fact, today being attacked in many quarters. The Secretary General proposes

> "to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a Western European hub." (*A/57/387, action 8, para. 72*)

At least in Europe, that would bring the 13 current information centres into one hub. Doing so would be quite good, and we support it.

My delegation would also support giving special attention to specific countries — and I mean here certain developed ones — where what the United Nations stands for is under constant attack by some quarters in those countries. In those countries — I do not need to mention any names, we know who they are — the United Nations has to come forward, through its Department of Public Information, and stand up for all the things this Organization has been advocating since the end of the Second World War. This being the only global multilateral organization, we should not shy away from defending it. The mouthpiece of the United Nations for doing that job is the Department of Public Information. It is in that context that my delegation supports the intention of the Secretary-General to reform that Department, which, in our view, has been dormant and has not been doing its job, and that has not been for lack of staff, centres, directives, missions and mandates. So we support the proposed attempts to change the situation.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, change is a process. The United Nations needs to change and adapt itself to meet the challenges confronting humanity: poverty eradication, sustainable development and the fight against ignorance, disease and injustice. We are not short of what needs to be done. We are not short of decisions and recommendations that have been adopted in this Assembly at the highest level. So I am not going to suggest any now. The question is not, therefore, whether there is a need for change.

The question, simply put, is whether the changes can be managed in such a way that they make the United Nations an effective instrument for averting the risk of marginalizing the majority from the process of globalization that is taking place before our very eyes. If that is averted, then we will have a healthy world. If

that is not averted, then, I am afraid, the United Nations will be a forum, as some have referred to it, that is just a debating society. I am sure that none of us would like it to be referred to as such. Coming from the country where the previous multilateral organization before the United Nations, the League of Nations, failed to act. The then-head of State of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie, made a plea and his plea was not listened to, and we know, of course, what happened to that organization. I am quite confident that the same will not happen to this Organization, as long as we all stand up for what it stands for.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): I wish to thank the President for convening this debate on an issue of cardinal importance to Nepal and the global community. I also commend the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item and for introducing it to the plenary, that report furnishes the substance for our discussion.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal for reform of the United Nations. We believe it is a good proposal with tremendous prospects for improving the work of the world body. That broad spectrum of recommendations is a big next step in the continuum of reforms the Secretary-General has undertaken thus far. As the proposal has far-reaching implications, it calls for most careful consideration on the part of Member States.

Reforms are to an organization what oxygen is to our body. The oxygen of reforms must therefore continue to flow to keep the United Nations alive and robust so that it can stand up to its emerging challenges. Otherwise, institutional atrophy will set in. Bearing that in mind, the heads of State or Government have, through the Millennium Declaration, told us what to do in a shared quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world in which human rights, justice and the rule of law are respected and promoted. The Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg conferences have told us how to do it, and in order to do it all we need a stronger United Nations.

Nepal broadly agrees with the Secretary-General's diagnosis of the maladies from which the United Nations suffers and with many of his prescriptions to remedy the situation. For instance, we concur with him that the General Assembly needs to rationalize its agenda further and the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions need to define and coordinate their tasks better. At the same time, we also believe that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without Security Council reforms, which are stalled now.

More specifically, we believe that the Secretary-General's recommendations to reform the United Nations will add tremendous value to our work and to the service the world body provides to the citizens of this planet. However, we need more technical detail on most, if not all, of his recommendations before arriving at a more informed judgment. Therefore, my delegation urges the Secretary-General to provide the essential details quickly that substantiate his recommendations. Still, let me make a few general comments at this stage on some of the specific proposals of the Secretary-General.

There is a clear necessity to align the budget with the United Nations priorities and to review the linkage between the budget and the medium-term plan, so that both of them remain relevant. There is also an imperative to review the budget formulation and processing mechanisms with a view to streamlining them both. In that respect, the Secretary-General has made serious and far-reaching recommendations, which, my delegation believes, deserve a serious and thorough examination by Member States before they arrive at a conclusion. Member States should consider the issue of flexibility for budget reallocations in the context of the necessity to maintain their legislative control over the budget.

Improving human rights management and streamlining the reporting requirements is vital for us all, so that small and poor nations can also meet their obligations. We also broadly recognize that there is a need to reposition the Department of Public Information and to reform the United Nations Library so as to provide better service to Member States, particularly to developing countries.

Restructuring United Nations Information Centres would be detrimental to the interests of information-poor developing countries if it were to lead to the weakening or closing of Information Centres in those countries.

While welcoming the measures to make reports more analytical, sharply focused and consolidated, Nepal underscores the need to exercise caution so that this process does not lead to compromise in the quality or availability of documents Member States desire.

We cannot concur more with the Secretary-General that there is a palpable need to better plan official meetings and conferences. As a small delegation trying to come to grips with the astonishing scope of the work of the United Nations, we know how strenuous and painful it can be to cover numerous parallel meetings of critical importance to us. However, better planning of meetings and conferences should not give way to selectivity in consultations.

Although the efforts to pool system-wide resources to improve the coherence, synergy and effectiveness of the United Nations system are welcome, we need to know how this proposal is going to be implemented. Our concern is that this should not dilute the priority and focus of the relevant constituent parts of the United Nations, or deprive them of dynamism in their activities.

The initiative to clarify roles and responsibilities across a broad spectrum of the issues and operations dealt with by the United Nations is long overdue. We would, however, want to see more detailed information on this issue. Meanwhile, we are convinced that the departments that are expected to help to implement the Monterrey and Johannesburg outcomes must not be curtailed or have their capacities impaired in the process. In that context, we fully support the strengthening of the office of the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa.

Nepal espouses most of the measures that have been outlined by the Secretary-General to improve human resources management at the United Nations. However, we would have appreciated the inclusion of measures to respond to such important questions as to how efficiency could be enhanced, redundancy eliminated and perquisites strongly linked with performance. Likewise, the steps to eliminate waste, improve the efficiency of the Organization and remove the serious geographical imbalance that exists in the United Nations civil service would have attenuated our long-standing concerns.

From my long experience in administrative reforms, I have come to the following conclusion: those who want to maintain the status quo should strive for gradual reform. Those who want gradual reform should strive for ambitious reform. Those who want radical reform are not reformers at all. Reform we must, however, if we want to maintain relevance and vitality.

The Secretary-General's second wave of reforms is a big step forward in the right direction. We should encourage him to implement those recommendations that already fall within his mandate. On the other hand, Member States should urgently and carefully examine recommendations that require fresh mandates for the Secretary-General. That is something we must do once detailed information becomes available. We believe that would be the right approach in moving forward.

I wish to assure the President that my delegation will extend its full support to his effort to facilitate the earliest possible implementation of the proposed reforms.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada): The timely, challenging and forward-looking report of our discerning Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), which we are now debating, can enhance our programme of work for years to come, if it is objectively and conscientiously assessed.

In order to strengthen the United Nations, now in its fifty-eighth year of useful, constructive and humanitarian service to humankind, we must engage in dispassionate self-analysis and self-criticism with respect to the modus operandi and the modus vivendi of our Organization. It is my intention to touch briefly on the former and, in the interest of a division of labour, to leave the latter to my more sophisticated and philosophically minded colleagues.

If an agenda for change involves change or reform for the better, we as Member States must measure up to the challenge and take the bull by the horns to institute corrective measures.

The dynamics of change are usually played out in three ways, even when change is positive and desirable. First, there is doubt, followed by resistance and, finally, acceptance. That is amply borne out by the many years that we have been debating reform of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Where are we presently — Still doubting, still resisting or a combination of both? When are we going to face the fact that there are very few certainties in the world, but that one certainty is that of change? It is inevitable. Sometimes it can be for the better, and sometimes for the worse. That is why we have to be so careful about instituting change.

That having been said, one must be blind in one eye and not able to see in the other not to discern that the least painful and most economical change that the United Nations can undertake in the first instance is to reduce the number and duration of statements and reports. To do that we must have the political will to overcome our addiction to obfuscating and repetitive rhetoric, thereby sparing one another excessive verbal punishment. More importantly, however, consider the time and money that can be saved if we only change our modus operandi in that regard. The Organization can benefit considerably by clustering recurrent agenda items for the purpose of greater economy in time, talent and finance.

Additionally, it would seem that the different agenda items allocated for debate and approval, whether by vote or consensus, to each of the six Main Committees by the General Assembly, can be streamlined so that there should be no need to send the same items back to the General Assembly for approval. This seems redundant, as delegations hardly ever change their positions in a matter of days. Streamlining the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees can lessen duplication, confusion and redundancy — all of which diminish the proper utilization of our time.

President John F. Kennedy in one of his profound statements said that "we should use time as a tool, not as a couch." Time is our greatest ally and asset and, if well-apportioned and utilized, can be the basis of a philosophy of life as contained in the following treatise.

Take time to think — it is a source of power. Take time to read — it is the foundation of wisdom. Take time to work — it is the price of success. Take time to play — it is the secret of perpetual youth. Take time to pray — it is the greatest power on Earth. Take time to laugh — it is music to the soul. Take time to be charitable — it is the road to Heaven.

In the interest of time, I have touched only briefly upon one aspect of agenda change in the modus operandi of our organization — less loquaciousness and more persuasive speech. This brings to mind the divine admonition: "Let thy speech be short, encompassing much in few words" (*The Holy Bible, Ecclesiasticus 32:8*), for very often speech can be a device to say nothing. Additionally, there are so many of us who can say nothing and can say it so well. In this connection, the advice of a speech professor is so apropos to the present situation:

> "When you speak, govern yourself by the three Bs: be brief, be bright and be gone."

Before going, however, let me reaffirm the faith and confidence of my country and my delegation in the United Nations, the parliament of mankind, by recalling the compliment which the first and longest serving Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, now retired, Sir Brian Urquhart, paid to the United Nations. "If the United Nations did not exist, it would have to be invented." Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, of beloved and revered memory, put it best with respect to our Organization and our human frailty when he said: "The United Nations was not intended to take us to heaven, but to save us from hell."

Finally, as I began with the dynamics of change, let me end with the philosophy of change taken from an ancient psalmist and philosopher:

> "Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): It is always difficult to follow the Permanent Representative of Grenada. However, I am going to be my own self.

My delegation would like at the outset to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77; the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and the representative of Egypt on behalf of the African Group. My delegation would like to build on the positive tone of those statements and make additional contributions here and there.

My delegation is in complete agreement with the proposal of the President of the General Assembly that, after the plenary debate is concluded, there be a series of informal consultations of the whole. Here, we would like to stress that consultations should be guided by transparency and a strategic approach, rather than get into the time-consuming details, which are interesting but will lead us nowhere. It is my delegation's contention that the attraction of some delegations to discussing details may be conditioned by the prescriptive nature of the report itself. Our major focus, however, should be on providing such guidance and

decisions that will, in the words of the Secretary-General,

> "make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples". (*A/54/2000, para. 367*)

The reform package, which is well articulated by the Secretary-General, is a continuation of the process he launched in 1997, which Member States welcomed and approved. That experience was very rewarding in that all Member States were involved and the outcome was quite positive, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report. It is our hope, that this time around, the same spirit will prevail.

I hasten to add that, since the debate started yesterday, there have been very animated presentations and concrete suggestions that I believe will inform the consultations that will follow. My delegation is of the view that we can avoid a lengthy debate on technicalities if, during the coming informal meetings, the Secretariat can provide concise additional clarifications. These could be published as official documents to complement or supplement the Secretary-General's report, as appropriate.

Let me now touch briefly on some of the reform proposals. To start with, my delegation commends the Secretary-General for his intention to reflect the priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration in the work of the Organization. It is the hope of my delegation that we can all endorse that objective. Given that the Declaration was made at the Summit, one hopes that such alignment will be system-wide. The Development Goals are currently being factored into a number of the priorities of the Member States, including my own.

Secondly, my delegation welcomes the thrust of the proposals to revamp and energize the way the Organization communicates its mission and developments to the Member States and to the rest of the global community. Our only caution is directed at action on information centres. My delegation would like to emphasize that centres in the developing countries require strengthening in terms of both personnel and resources. I need hardly emphasize that the people in the developing countries need the United Nations more and not less.

Thirdly, as far as the strengthening of the Secretariat is concerned, my delegation is in broad agreement. However, two concerns need to be borne in mind. On the one hand, Africa needs more than cosmetic attention in the Secretariat. The problems of conflicts, diseases and development are real. Coordination at that level is vital if the resources directed to the continent by a myriad of channels in the United Nations family are to have the desired impact. The other refers to skilfully striking a balance in strengthening the bureaucracy without undermining the democratic involvement of Member States. It is important to constantly bear in mind that any reduction of meetings should not be at the expense of the democratic participation of Member States.

Fourthly, my delegation would like to emphasize that when it comes to proposals on subjects that have treaty bodies, it is imperative to consult States parties to the relevant conventions on the measures envisaged to streamline reporting procedures and on the implementation of their obligations under those entities.

In the Secretary-General's report, there are quite a number of proposals and comments on reforms that require attention and action by Member States. I have in mind here the reform and expansion of the Security Council and the strengthening of the General Assembly. It is my delegation's hope that the President will devote one or several informal meetings to those areas of reform, so that when we finish deliberations we can say that we have covered all aspects.

We could possibly have made comments on many more aspects of the report. But suffice it to say that many of the previous interventions have been in tune with our thinking. We need to focus on the strengthening of the Organization, so that Member States, without exception, can feel comfortable serving it and using it.

It is our intention to take an active part in the informal consultations. For now, however, we welcome the thrust of the reform package.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): There is a famous saying from medieval times: "The times are changing and we are changing with them". When applied to the United Nations, that phrase can easily provoke one to think, "If only it were that easy". We routinely use the phrase "a rapidly changing world". Reform in a time of globalization is a clear imperative for everyone who believes that the United Nations, as the only organization of global reach, must play a

leading role in shaping a process which is viewed with suspicion in many quarters in the world.

Reform is thus not necessarily — and certainly not only — a recognition of the fact that we have to change our ways — even though there is of that — but also that we have to adjust to new challenges. We thus certainly subscribe to the need for further reform.

The reform process will be an important part of the legacy of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He has rightly identified reform as an ongoing process and has made it a priority of his entire tenure as the Secretary-General. We agree that a strategic decision is needed on the proposed agenda for further change, and we are ready to subscribe to the overall direction and the principles of the report before us (A/57/387).

Many of the reform measures proposed in the report are management decisions which are entirely within the Secretary-General's discretion. Others require action from intergovernmental bodies, which brings us to an important aspect of reform: looking back over the past few years, we cannot but conclude that, while major changes have been undertaken within the Secretariat, we, as Member States, have not delivered, or certainly not enough. Reform, and thus strengthening, of the main organs of the Organization is a necessity, and the proposals of the Secretary-General in that respect are very useful.

Debates on reform tend to be anticlimactic. We start out with great enthusiasm for what we all view as a necessity and are quickly bogged down in lengthy discussions about certain aspects which seem to be of particular importance to some of us. The problem is that pretty much everything we discuss in this building is of particular importance to some of us. As the current Chairman of the Third Committee, I hear daily and from all sides that documentation should be downsized, but I have yet to hear from any main sponsor of a draft resolution that a report on the implementation of its resolution is not necessary. If we think reform comes from good deeds by others, we will never carry it out.

The President took the Chair.

Reform discussions thus tend to be frustrating, but we believe that effective reform is feasible if we keep in mind what we have in common and, against that background, compromise on what we might not necessarily agree on.

Our collective interest lies in an effective, credible and truly representative United Nations. Some of the discussions of the past few weeks, in our view, have made this eminently clear, and it is what we see as our common goal in this and any reform debate. This should also enable us to overcome the North-South divide that tends to be a very troubling phenomenon on the occasion of reform debates. There is a greater and a common good at stake.

The strong emphasis placed by the report on the Millennium Declaration is a political necessity. The Millennium Declaration as a whole and the Millennium Development Goals in particular will constitute an important yardstick to measure the success and failure of the Organization as a whole in the coming years. It is thus clear to us that the United Nations needs to align its activities with the priorities identified at the Millennium Summit and at the global conferences of the past decade, especially in a situation where we must admit to already running behind schedule with regard to the implementation of the ambitious Millennium Development Goals.

In a comprehensive approach to reform — which is needed — one should perhaps refrain from comments on specific aspects of the package. However, in the light of the debate that has unfolded, we would like to state on this occasion that we of course agree with the attention given to the review of the human rights area in the framework of our reform efforts. We do not believe, however, that this could possibly dilute the traditional and necessary focus of the Organization on the area of development. To the contrary, we believe very strongly in the interdependence of issues of peace and security, development and human rights. Strengthening one of those areas will thus necessarily also strengthen the others.

The key points of the report — doing what matters, serving Member States better, working better together, allocating resources to priorities and investing in excellence — are principles to which we fully subscribe and are a good reflection of what is needed today. We therefore fully support your intention, Mr. President, to quickly bring about the political endorsement by the General Assembly of the agenda for further change.

Mr. Huntley (Saint Lucia): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group

of 77 and China. But we also wanted to put forward some of our views on the Secretary-General's report (A/57/387 and Corr.1). First let me compliment the Secretary-General on his frank and thought-provoking report and on his efforts to strengthen the Organization by trying to effect the acceptance of change in its methods of operation and in the perspective which it brings to the implementation of its mandate. Very often, huge bureaucracies are resistant to change. Individuals within the bureaucratic machine are horrified at the suggestion of even the slightest tinkering with the manner of operation that they have perpetuated over decades. They forget why they are where they are and make their manner of operation their mission, rather than being a servant of their real mission. For daring to strike out in a very different direction, the Secretary-General deserves our praise.

The Secretary-General's report focuses on two areas for change: first, the intergovernmental organs and, secondly, the Secretariat and its work programme. In this statement, we will limit ourselves to some preliminary thoughts on the first area: the intergovernmental organs.

My delegation agrees wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General's view that the intergovernmental organs, too, must change. We firmly believe that the change must start with the way we as representatives of Governments conduct our business. If we do not change, then change in the Secretariat alone will not strengthen the United Nations. For that reason, we fully agree with paragraphs 15 to 24 of the report, which outline the weaknesses in the General Assembly: the many overlapping items, the sterile and repetitive debates and reports that waste time, the limited resolutions and agenda items that come up like recurring decimals and the duplication of items. The report refers also to the need for more focus in the Economic and Social Council, the disgraceful stalling of Security Council reform and the proliferation of meetings by the intergovernmental bodies. For smaller Missions such as ours, the report's observation in paragraph 23 is very correct: "Many smaller Member States now find it practically impossible to play a meaningful role in even the most crucial activities of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council."

We therefore wish to exchange some preliminary ideas on how we may address those deficiencies and enable small Missions to participate more effectively in the deliberations of the body. First, the General Assembly convenes in early September for a session that ends the following September. Yet, from the moment of its convening, we are — as we say in the Caribbean — running around like mad fowls, caught up in a frenzy of activity on six Main Committees, the Security Council, subsidiary bodies, regional groups and plenary meetings of the Assembly, all competing, in a frantic spasm of meetings, to complete their work programmes by mid-December. Why do we subject ourselves to that unnecessary stress when we have the use of the full period of an 11-month session for a more leisurely and meaningful consideration of the work before us? Could not the Main Committees meet over a longer period of time? Could they not meet without plenary meetings taking place at the same time? And could we not alternate between meetings of the Committees and plenary meetings? We should thus take a serious look at how we organize the work of the General Assembly.

Then, we have the other practice of subsidiary bodies and committees meeting three quarters of the way through a session, with their work being presented for approval at the following session of the General Assembly and not at the session in which it started.

Might it not make more sense for our sessions to be organized in the following manner? After a session of the General Assembly is opened with its general debate on policy, subsidiary bodies could meet on their work programmes. Their reports would go to the Main Committees, which would forward their recommendations to the Assembly. It would all end in one session of the General Assembly, with the Committees meeting consecutively, and not in parallel, over the course of the year.

There is also the question of how we organize work in the Committees. Is it necessary, every year, to have a general debate in the Committees on the same items that come up before us every year, where we reproduce the same sterile statements with minor changes from those we delivered the previous year? Can we not simply move to informal and more meaningful discussions of draft resolutions tied to a given item?

Then there is the question of the draft resolutions that the General Assembly deals with every year. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly considered approximately 300 draft resolutions. Were they all

necessary? How much impact will they have on the daily lives of the people whom we represent? We recognize that this is a political and not a legislative world body, and that some resolutions are adopted for their political, not legislative, impact. But there are times when we do indeed act as a legislative body: when we punish States for not adhering to some of our resolutions. No serious body adopts the same legislation twice. It amends, strengthens or removes a piece of legislation. Could we not have a system in which once a resolution is adopted, it goes into our statute books, is referred to when necessary and is amended or even discarded, but is not adopted over and over again?

Perhaps what we need to do is to decide at a future session — say, next session — not to adopt any resolutions at all. We would then spend our time examining all the resolutions from the present session and deciding which ones we need to put in our reference book and which ones we need to discard.

Finally, my delegation would like to comment briefly on one proposal in the section of the report dealing with the Secretariat: the establishment of a partnership office. The increasing role of the private sector in the global economy needs more than a voluntary initiative like the Global Compact or a partnership office for group partnerships. There is need for an intergovernmental monitoring mechanism to ensure accountability and a positive contribution to sustainable development; this can best be served by a reinstatement of the transnational corporations unit of the United Nations.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, whose tireless efforts in promoting the reform of the United Nations since assuming office deserve not only words of praise but, first and foremost, our active support. The substantial progress achieved in the reform effort since 1997 hardly means that we can at last breathe easily. But it does mean that we can move ahead with confidence in our ability to work together to achieve success.

The efficiency of the functioning of the United Nations is, and always will be, judged on the Organization's ability to respond adequately to the challenges confronting humanity, no matter how difficult and complicated they might be. That underscores the need for both Member States and the Secretariat to place the functioning of the United Nations under periodic review in order to be able to make the timely adjustments, improvements and changes that are necessary.

Ukraine welcomes the new package of reforms proposed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). We fully subscribe to its key objectives aimed at making the United Nations a more effective instrument in multilateral relations through, to use the words of the Secretary-General, doing what matters, serving Member States better, working better together, allocating resources to priorities and investing in excellence.

Ukraine encourages the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of the proposals and recommendations that fall exclusively within his purview. My country is ready to work hard to reach decisions concerning the recommendations that require appropriate actions by intergovernmental bodies. We are also looking forward to further detailed information and clarifications, including specific follow-up reports due to be submitted within the next year.

It is important, in our view, to ensure that we proceed in an open and transparent manner, with genuine dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat. To a large extent, our hopes in that regard rely on the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, and I want to take this opportunity to assure him of the full support and understanding of my delegation in his efforts to achieve tangible results.

At this point, I should like to comment briefly on some of the proposals contained in the report.

First, Ukraine shares the view that the activities of the Organization should be aligned with the priorities and the objectives of the Millennium Declaration and with the decisions of past global conferences. In that regard, we look forward to a thoroughly revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that reflects the Organization's new priorities and takes into account the views of concerned States with regard to other existing mandates. We are convinced that such a major undertaking requires prior endorsement by Member States of the modalities for formulating the next budget so that it follows the agreed format.

Secondly, we consider the proposals of the Secretary-General in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights to be very timely and important. We fully share the view that the Commission on Human Rights should operate with the highest possible level of integrity, credibility and effectiveness. As a current member of the Commission, Ukraine realizes that body's heavy responsibility in upholding international human rights standards in a new world environment coping with threats of terrorism and other challenges. We find very useful the proposal on a more coordinated approach to the activities of the treaty bodies, on the standardization of various reporting requirements and on the possibility of each State producing a single report summarizing its adherence to the full range of international human rights treaties. The proposal to improve the special procedures is also, in our view, long overdue.

Thirdly, we believe — and I am sure everyone will agree — that it is of paramount importance to streamline the United Nations and to improve the planning and the servicing of meetings, which would make our work more focused and efficient and would greatly contribute to the process of revitalizing the General Assembly. But we should not limit ourselves to a mechanical approach towards the consolidation of reports. Therefore, additional clarification with regard to this very important issue would be extremely valuable.

Fourthly, we agree with the Secretary-General that the time has come to reform the existing process of planning, budgeting and evaluation. Such reform should result in the creation of a transparent, strategically oriented and streamlined budget that not only allocates resources to priority areas, but also is flexible enough to adjust both to the changing needs of the Organization and to the results of evaluation findings. In the current budgetary process, the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination regarding the budget's programme aspects is indispensable. We also see merit in giving fresh consideration to the Secretary-General's proposal on sunset provisions to provide for the systematic review of the impact and relevance of the Organization's activities in implementing its mandates.

Fifthly, the importance of equipping the Organization with an effective and efficient system of internal administration cannot be overstated. Prudent staff management is one of the most essential conditions for the success of its activities. Here, further steps are needed to improve the system of delegating authority in order to spread best management practices throughout the Secretariat. It is equally important to ensure high staff motivation and morale, which should be underpinned by competitive conditions of service and balanced between recognition of performance and enforcement of accountability. We believe that much needs to be done to ensure equitable geographical representation of Member States, especially in senior-level and high-level posts, within the Secretariat.

Finally, I should like to mention that the Secretary-General, in his report, correctly points to the vital need to push forward with Security Council reform. In addition, advancing reform of the Economic and Social Council — another important body — through strengthening its coordinating role in the economic and social spheres, and efforts to revitalize the General Assembly should not be put at the bottom of our agenda.

The authority and the efficiency of the Organization depend totally on its membership. If we wish to see it truly reformed and revitalized, we must show that through our practical deeds. We must prove that peoples can continue to rely on the United Nations and that the Organization is prepared to respond to new challenges and to withstand any test.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/57/387) on the strengthening of the United Nations. My country supports reform of the United Nations, because it believes that the Organization has before it extraordinary challenges that it must face effectively.

The report submitted to us has been the subject of numerous consultations and comments in the context of regional groups and various negotiating groups. My delegation takes a positive and constructive attitude towards the reform. We completely agree with the report's focus and its general guidelines, which we believe will make the Organization more agile and reinforce some areas of work that we consider essential.

We hope that once you, Sir, call for informal consultations, we will be able to work on the acceptance by consensus of a resolution through which the most urgent reforms can be implemented and

progress can be made towards strengthening the Organization.

As a contribution, my delegation would like to formulate some observations and comments on some of the main issues found in the report.

The proposals on human rights seem positive to us. The promotion and protection of these rights are an objective inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations. This is, therefore, a dimension that should be taken into account in all activities. The proposed actions serve to make the international protection of human rights more effective, because the dispersal and proliferation of current mechanisms could make the system less operative. We are waiting for the proposals of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to the future work of the treaty bodies and the special procedures. In this field streamlining is necessary, so that each body may more efficiently play its role of monitoring the international commitments made by States.

In due time, the proposals of the report should be enriched by specific recommendations derived from the Monterrey and Johannesburg summits. In this respect, we think it is appropriate to be specific. For example, the regional commissions should be strengthened so that they can broaden their approach to the integration of economic, social and environment issues, as was decided in Johannesburg.

This subject has been advocated by Latin American countries, in support of the role of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and should not be omitted from the recommendations, which may imply a redistribution of resources.

On the subject of public information, we think that in the production of news the few existing multilingual channels, such as radio programmes and traditional media, should be strengthened because the public in developing countries does not always speak English and does not have easy access to the electronic media. We also believe that there should be more thorough discussion of the role of the Committee on Public Information in the elaboration of strategic communications and, in general, of the public-information work of the United Nations. It would be important to have a debate on what the role of this body will be after the proposed reforms are carried out.

The measures proposed in the report to solve the shortcomings in the current process of budgeting and planning are, as we see it, those that need more detailed follow-up and thorough elaboration, in order to determine the most appropriate course of action.

An example would be the proposal concerning the elimination of the Committee for Programming and Coordination. Consideration should be given to what bodies might absorb its budgeting functions. As regards the medium-term plan, which now is adopted for four years and sets the basic objectives and strategies for the Organization, limiting its coverage to two years and having it coincide with the biennial budget might mean that the main objective would be lost and there would be the risk of it getting confused with the budget itself.

We agree with the Secretary-General about the need to simplify the process of preparing and adopting the medium-term plan. But it is important to discuss in greater detail the need to shorten the period it covers.

Finally, we agree with the proposal concerning the need to have a stricter system of evaluation and monitoring, since the existing system is somewhat diffuse, because there are a number of bodies responsible for this task.

With regard to the Organization and its personnel, we agree with the Secretary-General that it is necessary to increase the mobility of the staff throughout the United Nations system. In this respect, Argentina attaches special importance to the work of the International Civil Service Commission, whose scope covers the entire United Nations system.

I would like to express my support for the way you plan to proceed, Sir. My delegation will participate in the informal consultations and will develop some of the points that I have just mentioned. I am fully prepared to work towards a consensus solution as soon as possible and thus start the reforms that we are awaiting.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Having listened to the statement of my friend, the representative of Grenada, I do not have much to add. But, since I sent the text of my statement to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I have to read it aloud.

Our delegation wishes to express sincere thanks to you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to discuss the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening

of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). It is a report that has gained the attention of most delegations, creating a long list of speakers. But since time is of the essence, our delegation will not be able to deal with all the issues contained in the report. We would like to affirm that we will participate effectively in the work of the relevant United Nations bodies and we will have both the opportunity and the time to exchange points of view with objectivity and transparency.

Our delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the valuable efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in the areas of strengthening the role of the Organization, so that it can face the challenges and international changes with flexibility, dynamism and transparency.

This comprehensive report has come in response to the call of the General Assembly in its resolution 55/2 entitled the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which the heads of State or Government stressed their individual and collective responsibility towards their societies to enforce the principles of dignity, humanity, equality and justice for the whole world's population, particularly the most vulnerable. To achieve peace, security, development, the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease, protection of the environment, human rights, democracy, combating injustice, violence, terrorism and crime, the international community must make tremendous efforts so that the United Nations can become a more effective tool in achieving the above-mentioned goals, not only for our generation but for future generations as well.

In this context, we wish to reaffirm once again the vital role of the General Assembly in effectively discharging its duties as the principal organ for deliberating on issues and for adopting decisions and policies. We think that the Assembly should redouble its efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council as well as encourage streamlining, coordination and regular consultations among the main organs of the United Nations. We should also continue to strengthen the Economic and Social Council as well as the International Court of Justice to assist them in playing their Charter-mandated role.

In this respect, we call on the Secretariat to use the available resources, in accordance with clear-cut rules of procedure decided on by the General Assembly in the interests of all Member States, to adopt the best technological and managerial practices available, and to concentrate on those tasks that reflect the priorities set by all the Member States.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the importance of strengthening the United Nations and its programmes of action and of bringing about additional changes in future. It is a timely and necessary report, particularly at a time when we are facing numerous challenges stemming from globalization.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General and support all his efforts to strengthen the Organization. We believe that a stronger and more effective United Nations will be able to play a vital role and fulfil its responsibilities and carry out its tasks under the Charter, placing strong emphasis on the Millennium Declaration.

The Secretary-General called on the Member States to undertake a strategic dialogue among themselves to determine the most appropriate ways and means to strengthen the Organization. Our delegation is fully prepared to help in this respect, and we will place this question on our agenda. All Member States have a joint responsibility to determine how best to strengthen the United Nations.

The Secretary-General puts forward very important and comprehensive ideas and recommendations to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations in this increasingly globalized world. His proposals should be viewed in the context of the resolutions of the Millennium Declaration, the outcome of the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development, and the mandates handed down by those conferences, so that the General Assembly can assume its responsibility in a collective and transparent manner.

The reform of the United Nations should be an ongoing process, not an end in itself. That is why we should adopt clear follow-up mechanisms and with respect to the programme budget of the United Nations.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations as well as the organizations of civil society in all fields. He emphasized the importance of non-governmental organizations and of their participation in international

conferences and special sessions, and on occasion even in the General Assembly.

The rapidly increasing number of non-governmental organizations has put tremendous pressure on the resources of the United Nations. It is materially impossible to absorb all the non-governmental organizations asking to participate in United Nations conferences and meetings. Moreover, there seems to be an imbalance between the number of non-governmental organizations from industrialized countries and those from developing countries wishing to participate in the activities of the United Nations.

That is why we view with concern the pressure being put on the human and financial resources of the United Nations. We should limit this participation, bearing in mind the need to strike a proper balance between the non-governmental organizations of industrialized and of developing countries.

In this respect, we suggest that the United Nations consider the possibility of requiring a contribution by the non-governmental organizations so that they may participate and also to cover some of the expenses involved.

The report also mentions the fact that, for the work of the United Nations to reflect the priorities of the Millennium Declaration, the Organization should put in place a flexible and efficient system that would allocate sufficient resources to such priorities. This would require adequate planning and budgeting in order to adapt to the dynamic environment in which the Organization is working and to give the work of the Organization and of Member States a results-oriented approach.

The Secretary-General states that the present system has failed because the Member States do not always pay their contributions in full and on time and because the regular budget cannot keep pace with the rate of inflation, whereas the activities of the Organization are multiplying very rapidly.

In this respect, I should like to state that, while the international community wishes to improve the productivity of the United Nations, we must bear in mind the very difficult economic circumstances of many countries, especially developing States, which makes it difficult for them to pay the higher contributions required. For that reason, the United Nations should act wisely and shoulder some responsibility with respect to those expenses and control expenditures, so as not to put pressure on the developing countries and make them pay more than they can possibly afford.

We look forward to an amended programme budget, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly in 2003. We hope that it will reflect the priorities of the medium-term plan as well as the Millennium Declaration Goals. Any additional financial requirements for proposed reforms must be very carefully evaluated before they are approved.

Last but not least, we call on the Secretary-General to submit improved programme budgets and more detailed proposals concerning the medium-term plan that reflect the recommendations contained in the Millennium Declaration and provide improved working conditions for the United Nations staff, who should be proud of serving the United Nations and who want to feel that they are part of an effective Organization devoted to serving humanity as a whole.

We would like to reiterate in this respect the full support of our delegation for the reform process, bearing in mind the need to hold very constructive informal consultations and deliberations among Member States to discuss the Secretary-General's recommendations, to elaborate proposals that will garner a consensus from the international community and to submit them to the General Assembly for consideration, adoption and implementation.

We would like once again to stress the fact that we should not bring pressure to bear on the developing countries, whose resources are limited, and that we should also simplify the working procedures of the Organization and reduce the number of meetings and reports.

Mr. Dube (Botswana): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session, and for the excellent manner in which you have conducted our deliberations thus far. You will certainly be able to count on the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Botswana throughout your tenure.

Upon assuming office in 1997, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, launched the United Nations on a far-reaching path of reform. The objective was, in his words,

> "to identify the ways in which the United Nations can more effectively and efficiently meet the challenges that lie ahead as we enter a new century, and a new millennium." (*A/51/950*)

Undoubtedly, the implementation of some of the measures, strategies and actions that were proposed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), significantly enhanced the capacity of our Organization to effectively undertake what we the Member States require of it.

But, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out, reform is a continuous process, rather than an event. The United Nations may be a better Organization today as compared with two decades ago. That should not however, suggest that we have completely achieved our goal. In fact, much more remains to be done to advance the reform process.

Botswana fully supports the continued commitment of the Secretary-General to transform the United Nations into a credible and robust multilateral institution. The proposals and actions outlined in his report (A/57/387) are a step in the right direction, and must be considered with an open mind.

The report, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", is very timely, since it affords us the opportunity to take stock of the achievements and failures of the United Nations since its inception and the reforms initiated in 1997.

In order for the reform process to be successful, a close partnership between the Secretariat and Member States is crucial. As the chief administrative officer of the Organization, the Secretary-General can fulfil his functions only if he has the assured and full political and material support of the Member States from whom he derives his mandates.

As already pointed out by several earlier speakers, the most recent report of the Secretary-General contains many positive elements. However, we believe that some ideas will require further clarification so as to enable Member States to take informed decisions. We therefore associate ourselves with the list of questions forwarded to the Deputy Secretary-General by Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, answers to which we believe will facilitate a further exchange of views between the Secretariat and Member States.

We also appreciate the clarifications made during the informal briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General with regard to the fact that the report was a "strategic document" intended primarily to stimulate discussion by Member States.

My delegation accepts that there are actions in his reform proposals that fall directly within the purview of the Secretary-General and do not require explicit approval by Member States. We encourage the clear identification and implementation of those actions without delay. There are, however, other actions contained in the Secretary-General's report that we believe require thorough consideration and analysis by Member States before he implements them.

As we consider the report, Botswana will want to reflect on its impact on those issues that are dear to Africa. In this regard, we want to draw the Secretary-General's attention to the outcome of the high-level plenary meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), held on 16 and 17 September 2002. We believe that that discussion and the conclusions of the debate brought into focus important issues which Africa has decided will govern its future development. We therefore believe that, through the reform process, there should be an integrated approach to how the United Nations will work hand-in-hand with Africa to assist the continent to achieve its goals as set out in NEPAD.

Botswana fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen respect worldwide for all recognized human rights. We also believe that the role and functions of the Commission on Human Rights, the treaty bodies and special procedures should be enhanced and should not become the victim of our narrow interests.

My delegation shares the view that a great deal still needs to be done to strengthen the capacity of Member States to implement human rights principles and practices at the national level. It is important that these efforts be made with the full collaboration of the concerned Member States.

We have carefully studied the proposed measures and actions regarding the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, and I will limit my remarks to a few of those issues.

We strongly support the idea of simplifying the manner in which we conduct our work in the United

Nations, including in the management of our conferences and meetings. Too many prolonged and unproductive meetings cannot, in any way, be a good indicator of efficiency and productivity. We share the view that we need a results-based approach in our intergovernmental negotiations, facilitated by less support documentation that is more reader-friendly.

Measures to streamline reports requested by, and provided to meetings of Member States, and adherence to page limits, are welcomed by my delegation, as long as the quality of information provided is not compromised.

We also support the proposed measures on streamlining the management of trust funds, including the elimination of any duplication in the programme planning and budgetary process of the United Nations.

We have yet to understand, however, the rationale for the proposed changes concerning the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in the programmatic aspects of the budgetary process, as well as the proposed shortening of the medium-term plan. The role of the CPC, as the subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, can be improved to enable it to effectively perform its functions, in accordance with its terms of reference annexed to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976.

We would therefore propose that, at its forty-third session in 2003, the CPC should intensify its discussions, under the relevant item already on its agenda, aimed at improving its working methods. The important role performed by the CPC in ensuring the effective coordination of the functions of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and other entities within the United Nations system must be recognized.

Furthermore, the rationale for shortening the Organization's medium-term plan from the current four years to two also requires further explanation. The medium-term plan, as the framework for the programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the main policy directive of the United Nations, should be of a reasonable duration to enable projection of the activities of the Organization over a reasonable timeframe.

We believe that a sound financial and human resources management policy is key to the success of any organization, including the United Nations. The staff of the United Nations is an invaluable asset of this Organization in contributing to furthering the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

There must be continued emphasis on investment in staff training to ensure that the United Nations enjoys the service of a dynamic and capable international civil service. Also requiring emphasis is the enhancing of staff mobility; rejuvenating of the "ageing Secretariat"; and a strengthening of the internal justice system to ensure amicable resolution of staff-management disputes.

An important area that also needs urgent attention is the composition of our Secretariat, which is yet to reflect the requirements of a multinational organization.

While we appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to create a better geographical representation of staff in the United Nations Secretariat, more remains to be done with regard to addressing the long-standing concerns of the inadequately represented Member States, mainly developing countries — my country included.

We encourage additional measures to be taken to significantly improve employment opportunities for nationals of developing countries in the United Nations system, in particular at the higher and senior levels. The goal of attaining an equitably gender balance in the staffing of the Secretariat is also yet to be attained.

The financial resources provided to the Secretary-General also need to be commensurate with the mandates given to him by the Member States. We strongly urge Member States to ensure that the Organization is provided with the resources it requires to carry out its mandates.

We agree that the Secretary-General must be granted the adequate flexibility he requires to manage the resources at his disposal, provided there are clearly defined checks and balances to guarantee that the Secretary-General and his staff utilize those resources in a prudent manner and remain accountable to the intergovernmental machinery for their actions.

A better resources management policy should be based on a clear division of functions between the intergovernmental machinery and the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

Before I conclude my remarks, let me assure the Secretary-General of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Botswana in his commitment to improving and strengthening the ability of the United Nations to effectively and efficiently fulfil its mandate.

We also pledge our unqualified support to the Deputy Secretary-General, as she guides us through the reform process.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of Iraq to the United Nations, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report before us today entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change". The report clearly outlines the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his team to make the United Nations system better able to face the challenges of this century.

The question that arises today is, why reform? Is it because the United Nations has become incapable of fulfilling its commitments and has failed to address the challenges threatening our world? Or is it that reform is merely an exercise in cosmetic change that gives the appearance of our interest in international relations and in keeping abreast of them? Before answering those two legitimate questions, one must admit that the ongoing United Nations reform process underscores a very important issue: our firm belief in this Organization, to which we all belong, and our commitment to its Charter. Those two components constitute the cornerstone of a world built on peace, justice and equity. That is indeed our hope and the thrust of our common interests. We look forward, as we have yesterday and will tomorrow, to a new century of peace and stability, in which human values and a civilized code of conduct prevail.

The past century experienced devastating wars, turbulence and internal conflict. Following that, we had high hopes for peace, stability and compassion. But terrorism, hegemony, colonialism in its old and new forms, and threats to conquer nations and to change their systems of governments shattered many of our hopes across the world. Forces of darkness have re-emerged to impede the progress of the United Nations in this century. We should not allow these forces to prevail. Indeed, we should continue to struggle strenuously and defiantly to overcome current and future difficulties. This is an inherent right and goal set out in the Charter of the Organization.

The message of reform is addressed to all countries of the world. Its essence, simply put, is that the principles and values upon which the world Organization was established and the goals that we have set ourselves require the common and constant efforts of all. It requires a pause to analyse the difficulties, crises and problems that have impeded the fulfilment of the obligations that the United Nations system has undertaken. In order to embark on a serious discussion on this important question, it is essential to address the current obstacles and difficulties.

As has been frequently said, we all belong to a global village. Nevertheless, we still lack the collective perception of humankind as one single community, simply because certain wealthy, powerful and influential States in the world today continue to place their narrow national interests above the common good of all humankind. Moreover, international relations are driven today by considerations of power rather than anchored in the high values and principles under which this Organization, to which we all belong, was established.

The General Assembly — over which you, Sir, are presiding this year — is the only organ in which any State Member of the United Nations can participate in discussing any issue before it. Indeed, the Assembly is more open and more transparent than any other organ and should be kept that way. However, the resolutions of this Assembly do not enjoy adequate enforcement power. We must therefore consider how to enforce the resolutions of the General Assembly, most of which remain dead letter. Moreover, we must stress the importance of General Assembly participation in discussing the political issues on the agenda of the Security Council.

The Security Council reform process cannot continue ad infinitum. Council reform should be undertaken on the basis of the principle of equal sovereignty among States and the Council should be more democratic, transparent and accountable. The General Assembly, for its part, must have a role in correcting the erroneous courses of action which the Council occasionally takes. We believe that the expansion of the Council's membership must reflect the increased membership of the Organization in order to ensure that the Council becomes more democratic, representative and open.

With respect to the Economic and Social Council, we believe that there is a need to strengthen its Committees, and especially its economic and development commissions, in view of the current grave world economic situation. We therefore welcome the proposed coordination among the United Nations organs not only in those fields, but in all areas.

The available resources must be commensurate with the proposed tasks in order to enhance the mandates of the United Nations system. The Organization must receive all financial contributions on time. Despite the scarcity of financial resources — a topic that is frequently discussed in this Hall — it is very strange that Iraq should have been prevented from making its financial contributions to the United Nations over the past 12 years. These contributions would be drawn from revenue accruing under the Memorandum of Understanding on the oil for food programme and derive 100 per cent from Iraqi sources. Why does the United Nations not accept these cumulative arrears from Iraqi United Nations funds, despite the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars are available? My delegation knows as well as you do, Sir, that there is a political objective behind this stand that does not do justice to the United Nations. It is the intention to deny Iraq its legitimate right to play an effective role in the work of the Organization. As all know, Iraq was a founding Member of the United Nations.

In the area of human rights, we must never forget that the world has many cultures. We believe that the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development, is the foundation of peace and security and a principal factor in preventing conflict. We also believe that efforts must be made to respect human rights. This requires an integrated approach and the immutable linkage of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. However, efforts to implement and consolidate civil and political rights to the detriment of others are bound to cause friction and clashes. In order to promote respect for human rights, the General Assembly is invited to consider the catastrophic impact on the enjoyment of all human rights of economic sanctions that have been and shall be imposed on nations in the name of this Organization or by some powerful States unilaterally.

The Secretary-General has devoted part of his report to the question of the maintenance of international peace and security and the protection of civilians in times of armed conflict. At this juncture, we would recall the grave deterioration in the living conditions of the Iraqi people under the war that has been tirelessly waged against Iraq for 12 years by the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Those two States have continuously striven to maintain the state of siege and warfare against my country. We are all very familiar with the recent threats of war against my country made by the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

I should also like in this regard to recall the conditions of the unarmed Palestinian people in the face of Israeli practices that are in total contravention of international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. The time has indeed come for the international community to ensure respect by those States for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations must have a larger role in this serious and important sphere, away from the narrow interests of some major, influential Member States of the United Nations.

Crucial factors that would prevent armed conflict include the maintenance of international peace and security, upholding the rule of law, implementation of development goals, eradication of poverty, promotion of human rights and democracy and combating terrorism. These factors must be included in the development of a strategy to prevent armed conflict which examines both the root causes of conflict and ways to address those causes.

The current international conditions under which we live today remind us of the fact that the United Nations remains relevant and indispensable, although reform is necessary for some of its structures. This is a noble mission and my Government stands ready to participate effectively in this reform process in order to build a better future for future generations during the current millennium.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to make an announcement concerning additions to the programme of work of the plenary of the General Assembly for Monday 4 November 2002. In the morning, the General Assembly will consider as the first item, agenda item 16, election of 20 members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 52.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.